

### ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method and apparatus controls an internal combustion engine of a vehicle in which an exhaust purifying catalyst capable of storing oxygen is provided in an exhaust system of the engine. The internal combustion engine is adapted to be temporarily stopped when a predetermined condition for stopping the engine is satisfied, and resumes its operation when the predetermined condition is eliminated. The internal combustion engine is operated so as to reduce an amount of oxygen stored in the exhaust purifying catalyst during a temporary stoppage of the engine, before fuel starts being burned for resuming the operation of the engine.